

# Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council Method of Distribution Citizen Participation Plan for Round 2.2 Disaster Recovery Supplemental Allocation

## Summary Information

### Contact Information

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## Citizen and Non-Governmental Organization Outreach

The Council of Government will encourage citizens, with particular emphasis on persons of low-to-moderate income who are residents of slum or blighted areas, to submit their views regarding community development and housing needs resulting from the disaster in the following ways:

LRGVDC has a two part process for the MOD/Application process. Due to the lack of quality data for a thorough needs assessment, the LRGVDC must perform a two track process. First, LRGVDC will make a limited proposal that holds hearings on the MOD process without assigning the funds distribution. In that process, the LRGVDC will receive public comment on the management of funds, any remaining split between housing and non-housing and the management structure for these funds but will not provide information on the targets for funds expenditures.

The LRGVDC scheduled four public hearings on each track. One public hearing will be held in each LRGVDC county (Cameron, Hidalgo & Willacy Counties) to receive input on the MOD and a final hearing at the Weslaco City Hall. The dates included in the section titled "Required Meeting and Public hearings" apply only to the track 1 MOD process.

Additional public meetings will be scheduled to receive input on the needs assessment and application process.

LRGVDC will accept comments at all the hearings and also will consider written comments submitted in a timely manner for anyone who prefers to comment in writing or is unable to attend the meetings. Notices for the Public Hearings will be advertised in local newspapers in English and Spanish. Notices will be sent to all elected officials, CDBG Directors, housing agencies, housing authorities, housing advocates, emergency management staff, DHHS contacts and many other interested entities. Public Service announcements will also be sent to all local media such as radio, TX and newspaper referencing the Public Hearings.

The second track will be a process to analyze the data gathered to overcome the lack of data for the housing needs as

called for in the Conciliation Agreement and state Housing Guidelines. This information will involved a previously approved plan to obtain additional sources of data, perform and analysis of the Round 1 and Round 2.1 expenditures, and to then establish a target for expenditures based on the needs assessment for the application process to be completed in December.

The following local organizations that provide services or housing for low-to-moderate income persons, including but not limited to, the local Public Housing Authorities, the local Health and Human Services offices, the local Mental Health and Mental Retardation offices, Community Development Corporations and Community Housing Development Organizations, will receive written notification concerning the date, time, location and topics to be covered at the method of distribution public hearings:

LRGVDC will forward Public Hearing notice regarding the MOD to all Municipal & County Governments, local Health & Human Service Offices, County Health Departments, CDBG contacts, housing contacts and will post the notice on the LRGVDC web site, Secretary of State web site, and GLO web sites. All information pertaining to Disaster Recovery Funding will be posted on LRGVDC web site and accessible in English and Spanish.

The following organizations interested in fair housing issues and representing protected classes of individuals will be contacted to gain additional perspective on fair housing and civil rights issues in the region, and how the people they represent were affected by Hurricanes Dolly and/or Ike. Approaches beyond simple written notification of public hearings are required and detailed below:

LRGVDC will provide notice in both English and Spanish of all the public meetings to local housing groups, housing authorities, housing providers, community development directors, identified public works groups, and community service organizations. The MOD process will discuss the current draft of the MOD that will allow for the general distribution of funds and be a supplement to the existing MOD in Round 2.1. Specific targets will not be completed until the December application process.

Each of the public meetings will serve as a round-table type discussion allowing for input into the process for anyone who chooses to participate.

The Council of Government acknowledges that language differences may play a role in effectively reaching non-English speaking residents. The Council of Government will address these potential barriers by providing notification efforts as follows:

LRGVDC, as matter of practice, provides translation services to all public hearings and to improve outreach to non-English speaking residents, LRGVDC will publish the notice in Spanish at local newspapers, send the notice to public libraries and post on LRGVDC web site. Only one Spanish language newspaper exists in the Rio Grande Valley, but notice will be published in local newspapers that are provided free of cost to the public and low income residents have better access to these papers. In addition, if requested, persons with disabilities or special needs not allowing for access to the documents on the web site will be accommodated by contacting the LRGVCD.

## Public Hearing Content

The public hearings will include a discussion of the following topics:

- The development of housing and community development needs resulting from the storm
- The amount of funding available
- All eligible activities under the Texas Community Development Block Grant Supplemental Disaster Recovery program, including linking activities to the storm through direct damage or failure to function
- The Council of Government's past distribution of TxCDBG Supplemental Disaster Recovery funds
- The Council of Government's draft Method of Distribution
- The COG's completed Fair Housing Activity Statement – Texas Form ("FHA Form") with the MOD.

## Required Meeting and Public Hearing Information

To the extent possible, the Council of Government will adhere to the following schedule of hearings and notifications:

### Posting of Draft Method of Distribution for Public Review

Date/Time: **10/19/11**

Website Address: **www.lrgvdc.org**

### First Set of Public Hearing s Scheduling Information

Date/Time: **10/17/11 1:00 p.m.**

Location: **City of Raymondville Rural Technology Building,  
Raymondville, Texas**

Date/Time: **10/18/11 9:00 a.m.**

Location: **LRGVDC Transportation Center, Weslaco, Texas**

Date/Time: **10/18/11 5:30 p.m.**

Location: **Cameron County Courthouse, Exhibit Room, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor,  
Brownsville, Texas**

Notification consistent with GLO requirements will be provided on or before the following dates:

Date Personal Notice of Hearing will be sent to entities: **10/12/11**

Date Notice of Hearing will be published on COG Website: **10/12/11**

Date Notice of Hearing will be published on Secretary of State Website: **10/12/11**

Date Notice of Hearing will be published in regional newspaper(s): **10/13/11**

### Second Public Hearing Scheduling Information

Date/Time: **11/03/11 9:00 a.m.**

Location: **Weslaco City Hall, Weslaco, Texas**

Notification consistent with GLO requirements will be provided on or before the following dates:

Date Personal Notice of Hearing will be sent to entities: **10/12/11**

Date Notice of Hearing will be published on COG Website: **10/12/11**

Date Notice of Hearing will be published on Secretary of State Website: **10/12/11**

Date Notice of Hearing will be published in regional newspaper(s): **10/13/11**

The COG understands public hearings shall be held at a time and location compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and convenient to potential or actual beneficiaries. The hearing must include accommodations for persons with disabilities, including provision of auxiliary aids. The COG will accommodate these needs in the following ways:

All hearing notices include contact information for those persons requiring auxiliary aids or other special accommodations. LRGVDC will make appropriate arrangements if contacted at least 48 hours prior to the hearing. All meeting facilities comply with the American with Disabilities Act.

The COG understands its responsibility to provide interpretive services when a significant number of non-English speaking residents can be reasonably expected to participate in the public hearing. If these services are determined to be necessary, the COG will address this need as follows:

LRGVDC, as matter of practice, provides translation services at all public hearings.

### **Efforts Exceeding Minimum Participation Requirements**

The GLO has encouraged Councils of Governments to aggressively seek public participation when developing the method of distribution. In pursuit of this goal, the Council of Governments held additional meetings and took other additional actions as follows:

The LRGVDC has planned to supplement the HUD/FEMA/SBA data to more accurately reflect the damage caused by the storm and to help it target the areas that remain underserved but most impacted. In addition to committing to work with housing groups in this process, the LRGVDC appointed and worked closely with persons representing a broad array of civil rights groups, colonias and other housing groups to develop a method of affirmatively furthering fair housing in our FFAST Form process that will assist in development of a targeted plan.

The MOD process contains significant public outreach in a two step process that allows the LRGVDC to meet the state deadlines and still provide maximum public input given the disadvantage the FEMA data has presented to our region. LRGVDC will provide translation services for non-English speaking citizens at the Public Meetings. LRGVDC will be issuing Public Service Announcements to all local media to seek public input for the MOD.

# HUD DISASTER RECOVERY ESTIMATED TIMELINE

